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My Story, Part 2

—By Emanuel Schrock

Welcome to part two of Emanuel Schrock's true life story.

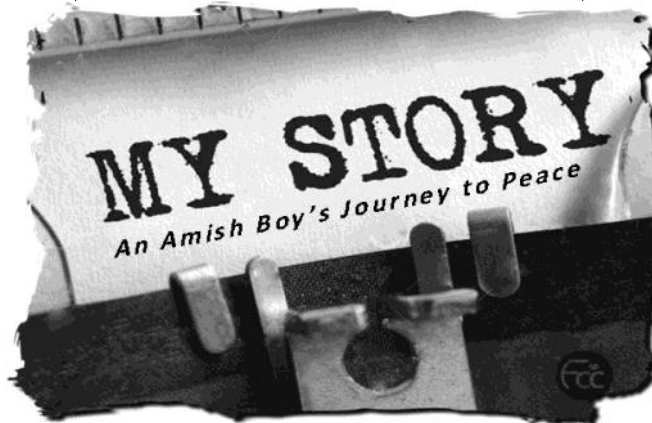
2. Lost and Hopeless

I longed for God, yet the desires of the flesh kept pulling me away from Him. Every day I faced strong temptations in all areas of life, and, though I tried my best to fight them, I could not resist. I was Amish; everything I did and everywhere I went, I could not be anything else. My clothes were Amish, my house was Amish, my family was Amish, and most importantly, my church was Amish. But I did not know God. I heard about Him, and read about Him. But I didn't know who He was, much less love Him.

My body didn't care that I was Amish; when I was faced with temptation, I did what the rest of the world did: I gave up on righteousness, and chose sin instead of God. My straw hat did not keep the dirty and vile thoughts and pictures from floating inside my brain. My suspenders and homemade clothes didn't keep me from outrageous fits of anger and vile cursing and swearing. They couldn't control the evil lust that burned in my heart after I saw that first glaring page of

pornography. I was taught to obey my parents because that is what Amish do, but I didn't love them. Many times I hated them.

In short, being Amish did not change who I was as a person, and I knew that someday I would stand before God, all



alone, and I wondered if it would matter then that I was Amish. I had a foreboding feeling that even though I looked different and more religious than the rest of the world, I was of the same class as they were, and would be judged by the same law as they. Somehow I sensed that the law of God would someday cut through my Amish cover, and the sinful person I really was would be exposed for God and the world to see.

Life continued, and there were some

changes in the family. My oldest brother had left home and the Amish church when he was 18, just before he was scheduled to be baptized. Since he had left the church, I was told that he had fallen into the devil's hands, that not only was he deceived, but he was now a dangerous threat to our family, because he could deceive us, as well.

I was young, but I well remember the confusion and turmoil our family went through when my brother left. Having a family member leave home and the church was the next thing to someone dying. My dad retreated into a major state of depression; my mom's grief was so deep that the pain showed constantly on her face. My older sisters walked around with red and swollen eyes. My next oldest brother was angry.

I wasn't sure what to think. I knew that what had happened was serious, yet, there was a strange secret feeling of excitement. Something new was in the air, and for a young Amish boy, nothing was ever new, nor did the future

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have any promise of holding anything new. As I grew older, I often scorned my brother in front of my friends for deserting the faith, but deep down I wondered if perhaps he wasn't closer to answering the same questions that I was being bothered with—questions like, "How can I know that I am right with God?" I was secretly jealous of him at times, because he had the advantage of searching for answers outside the box, an advantage that I was told was sinful and deceptive; but in the back of my mind, I wondered if my brother was closer to finding the answers than I was or my parents were. At least for him there were no limits to hold him back from pursuing the answers. For me and the rest of my family, there was a barrier that loomed in front of us, beyond which we were not allowed to go. It felt like being held in a fenced-in pen.

My brother often wrote letters to us at home, which we read eagerly. In them he stated his reasons for leaving, pointing out areas where he claimed the Amish church did not agree with the Bible. Some of the letters had an impact on my father, because my brother asked that if being a member of the church wasn't able to give victory over sin and peace with God, then why was my father asking him to come back?

Five years after my oldest brother left home, my second oldest brother left, as well. His departure from the faith sent a shockwave through the community, since he had been a faithful and respected young man. He was soon dismissed as another deceived young man who wanted to go out into the world to have fun, and used the Bible as his excuse. Yet, those

of us who knew him and lived with him, knew that he was in desperate pursuit of the truth as he found it in the Bible. He cared more about God and righteousness now than he ever did before, but that didn't seem to matter to most in our community. He had left the faith, and there didn't seem to be any hope for him. They took it as a serious warning of how deceiving it can be to listen to those *abgegangenie* (deserters) who use the Bible as an excuse to live like the world.

These dramatic changes, among others, drove me to the Bible. I began



reading it in English, though that was discouraged by the church I attended. I started reading the familiar passages that I had heard preached all my life in church, and suddenly the words of the Bible came alive with meaning, simply because I was able to understand them. I discovered that the Bible in English was saying the same thing as it did in German, only now I understood it better because I understood the words in English.

The new change in life, along with some relationship problems between my parents, made my home life confusing

and unstable. I longed more than ever to have the answers to life, and more and more I found myself going to the Bible for those answers. I read it intensely, hoping to find the answers I was looking for. Gradually, I saw the Bible as what it was actually saying, instead of what someone else told me it said. The fierce temptations of lust that all young men are faced with drove me in desperation to find some source of power and victory that would help me overcome, and slowly the Word of God became that source of victory.

The question of where I was headed still loomed before me, and I could not avoid it. Simply belonging to a certain culture seemed like an increasingly fragile hope upon which to build my eternity, but where else was I supposed to turn to find peace with God? What was it that I needed to do to be born again?

As I read the Bible, I was faced with a few questions. I had grown up hearing that it was impossible to know that you are born again. It was considered prideful for a person to say that he knows he will make it to heaven; but then why did Jesus say, "*You must be born again, or you cannot see the kingdom of God*"? Why would the Bible tell us that we need to be born again in order to see heaven, and then turn around and say there is no way we can know we are going there? It would be like a father telling his son he must go to the grocery store, but then telling him there's no way he can know if he is on the right road to get there. Then I would read verses like this in 1 John 3:

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he

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that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life. . . .

I became convinced that there was definitely a way I could know I had eternal life. If Jesus came to die for me and to give me life, why could I not know that I had it? According to these verses, if I have the Son, I have life, but if I don't have the Son, I don't have life.

Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

This was scary stuff for me. I realized that I could not get to heaven by being good enough. This was frustrating, because now I didn't know what to do, since God would not accept my works in exchange for salvation. Being good was the only thing I knew how to do to please God, and if that didn't work, I didn't know what else to do. I felt like my salvation was outside of my control, that there was nothing I could do to get God to save me.

I tried all the things people told me I needed to do. I confessed my sins, and was as sorry for them as I could be. Many, many times I asked God to forgive me. I often prayed until I felt better, but I was never sure that God had really forgiven me. I always felt like I couldn't be sorry enough or feel bad enough about my sins for God to forgive me for them.

As I continued to read the Bible, I came across verses like these:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Even though I had heard these verses in German many times, I never understood them. I had heard about *der glauben* (faith) growing up, but I didn't know what the Bible meant when it said I must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. To just believe was too simple; there had to be more involved to salvation than just



believing in Jesus. Surely there was some work that I had to do; surely I must do something to clean myself up before God would save me.

Yet the words of the Bible kept coming back to me: *"He that believes is not condemned."* That sounded so easy; and it was exactly what I was looking for. I wanted to be free from this condemnation, this guilt and fear of death and hell. I wanted to be free from the judgment that hung over me, and in that simple verse, I saw a way out.

Many times I thought to myself, *"If I could just believe."* But I didn't know how to believe. When I tried to believe, I would look inside my heart and try to make faith rise up inside of me and try to find a feeling that told me that I had believed; but when the feeling didn't come, I would give up, deciding that I must not have truly believed. Therefore, believing was always something just out of my reach, and I felt like I would never be able to reach the point where I truly believed and was born of God.

I hated this feeling of helplessness. I wished that God would just come down and save my soul because I asked him to. Didn't He see that I wanted to be saved? Didn't He know that I was trying to be a Christian and wanted to do what was right? Didn't He see that my heart was sincere, and that I truly wanted to know Him and serve Him? Why then could He not just do the miracle that it took to save me? What more could I do to show Him that I was serious about following Him?

It seemed like I was doing my best to do my part, but God was just not doing His part. I did all the things I knew how to do to be a godly young man, but it seemed like God didn't care. I fought sin as hard as I could and did my best to be righteous, but none of my efforts succeeded in giving me peace with God. There were many times when the full weight of the importance of my salvation was so heavy upon me that I cried out to God for mercy because I didn't know what else to do, but it seemed that God did not hear me.

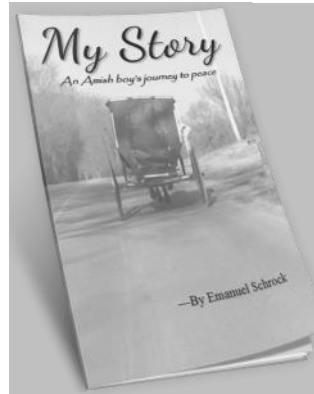
I was in this state of despair for a long time, and I wondered if I would ever see the light. I envied other people who were rejoicing in the peace and forgiveness they had found in Christ, and I became even more exasperated. It was frustrating to see others possessing the peace

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that I was looking for and which the Bible said I could have, but they had it, and I didn't know how to get it.

In my mind, I put much more effort into my salvation than many of them did, and I couldn't understand what worked for them. What were they doing that I wasn't? It seemed to me that God was being partial by only giving salvation to those who were lucky enough to meet the right requirements. How I longed to be one of those lucky ones. —Emanuel Schrock

End of *My Story*—Part 2; Part 3-4 coming up in next issue.

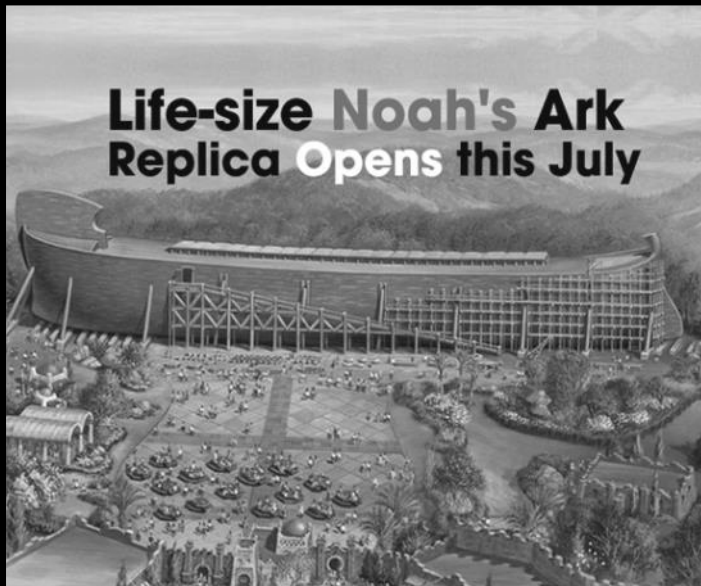


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Grace Alone No More

—Grace

We recently received a letter in the mail from a lady named Grace. Grace shared her testimony and a little bit of her troubled past with us. She gave us permission to share them with you. She would like us all to pray for her. Please take a moment to read her story below:

A while back, I was seeking help from a counselor. I was miserable on the inside and I poured out my heart to him. At one point, I was in so much pain that I fell to the floor and began pulling at my hair. I somehow received relief from the pressure on my head.

My counselor knew that there was something I was holding back from him. Finally, I gave in and told him about a

very unhealthy relationship I had with someone. Just talking about my relationship brought me more guilt. I realized that opening up about things did not unburden my aching and lost heart.

One day I was taking a nap, and I dreamed that I was at the grocery store in the fruit aisle. While there, a green snake began to chase after me. My scream woke me up, and immediately my heart turned to the Word of God.

My struggles were not over, but my journey toward God began that day. At the time, I did not know that I had covered up so many deep areas of my childhood; these were all areas that God had to unveil to me.

It wasn't until years later that I began to have memories of my past. These memories were hidden so deeply, that when they came back to me, the very foundation upon which I had stood for years was shaken.

Thankfully, God in His wisdom knew that I was not capable of handling such tragic events. Only by God's grace did I survive these traumatic events in my early childhood. All I know is that I can trust my Savior, and He is the new foundation on which I am building my life.

—Sincerely, Grace

Join Grace in upcoming issues as she shares more of what she is learning from God and His word.

END

The 5 Love Languages

We all want to feel *appreciated and wanted*.

We all want to feel *understood and cared for*.

We all want to feel *loved*.

Whether you're single, dating, or married, the thought of loving and being loved is what life is all about.

We all love differently; therefore, the way we want to be loved is different. It doesn't necessarily fit into the "one-size-fits-all" box.

Dr. Gary Chapman has spent decades counseling couples and helping strengthen marriage relationships. He realized that every person has his or own "love language," or way in which one expresses and interprets love. Dr. Chapman also noticed that almost everyone is attracted to someone who speaks a different love language than his own. He believes that it is

important to know and understand your own love language, and also the love language of your spouse. As Dr. Chapman says, "True love is not a myth, but it takes work. Making sure that the one you love feels loved requires commitment, understanding, and effective communication."

In his pamphlet, *Gateway to the 5 Love Languages*, Dr. Chapman summarizes the five love languages:

Words of Affirmation—Actions don't always speak louder than words. If this is your love language, unsolicited compliments mean the world to you. Hearing the words, "I love you," are important—hearing the reasons behind that love sends your spirits skyward. Insults can leave you shattered and are not easily forgotten.

Quality Time—In the common language of Quality Time, nothing says "I love you" like full, undivided attention. Being

there for this type of person is critical, but really being there—with the noise off, fork and knife down, and all chores and tasks on standby—makes your significant other feel truly special and loved. Distractions, postponed dates, or the failure to listen can be especially hurtful.






Receiving Gifts—Don't mistake this love language for materialism; the receiver of gifts thrives on the love, thoughtfulness, and effort behind the gift. If you speak this language, the perfect gift or gesture shows that you are known, you are cared for, and you are prized above whatever was sacrificed to bring the gift to you. A missed birthday, anniversary, or a hasty, thoughtless gift would be disastrous—so would the absence of everyday gestures.

Acts of Service—
Can sweeping the floors really be

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HOW TO SPEAK YOUR SPOUSE'S LOVE LANGUAGE

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WHICH LOVE LANGUAGE?	HOW TO COMMUNICATE	ACTIONS TO TAKE	THINGS TO AVOID
 WORDS OF AFFIRMATION	Encourage, affirm, appreciate, empathize. Listen actively.	Send an unexpected note, text, or card. Encourage genuinely and often.	Non-constructive criticism, not recognizing or appreciating effort.
 PHYSICAL TOUCH	Non-verbal - use body language and touch to emphasize love.	Hug, kiss, hold hands, show physical affection regularly. Make intimacy a thoughtful priority.	Physical neglect, long stints without intimacy, receiving affection coldly.
 RECEIVING GIFTS	Thoughtfulness, make your spouse a priority, speak purposefully.	Give thoughtful gifts and gestures. Small things matter in a big way. Express gratitude when receiving a gift.	Forgetting special occasions, unenthusiastic gift receiving.
 QUALITY TIME	Uninterrupted and focused conversations. One-on-one time is critical.	Create special moments together, take walks and do small things with your spouse. Weekend getaways are huge.	Distractions when spending time together. Long stints without one-on-one time.
 ACTS OF SERVICE	Use action phrases like "I'll help...!". They want to know you're with them, partnered with them.	Do chores together or make them breakfast in bed. Go out of your way to help alleviate their daily workload.	Making the requests of others a higher priority, lacking follow-through on tasks big and small.

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BASED ON "THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES", A BOOK BY DR. GARY CHAPMAN

an expression of love? Absolutely! Anything you do to ease the burden of responsibilities weighing on an Acts of Service person will speak volumes. The words he or she most wants to hear are, "Let me do that for you." Laziness, broken commitments, and making more work for them, tell those with this language that their feelings don't matter.

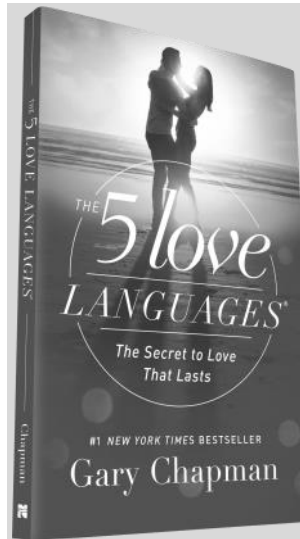
Physical Touch—This language isn't all about the bedroom. A person whose primary language is Physical Touch is, not surprisingly, very touchy. Hugs, pats on the back, holding hands, and thoughtful touches on the arm, shoulder, or face—they can all be ways to show excitement, concern, care, and love. Physical presence and accessibility are crucial, while neglect or abuse can be unforgivable and destructive.

What is your love language? What language does your spouse best understand and respond to? Do you want to find out? **Take Dr. Chapman's love language quiz (on the enclosed insert) and find out.** Answer the questions, add up the totals as directed on the insert, and learn how you and your spouse can improve your communication with each other and therefore grow in love.

END

15 Things to Say ... to Make Him or Her Feel Great

1. Thanks for doing that. It means a lot to me when you serve me in little ways like that.
2. I can't believe how _____ you are. You are so clearly gifted in that area.
3. I'm seeing lately that you may not feel very _____, but I hope you know I still respect you deeply.
4. I love when you wear that.
5. I'm sorry. Will you please forgive me for _____?
6. I'm proud of you.
7. I forgive you, and I won't bring this up again, okay?
8. You handled that incredibly well.
9. You're right.
10. Just wanted to let you know I'm praying for you.
11. I trust you.
12. I had no idea you could do that! You continue to impress me.
13. I love being around you.
14. I saw this at the store, and it made me think of you.
15. You are so well-disciplined in _____.



5 Love Languages

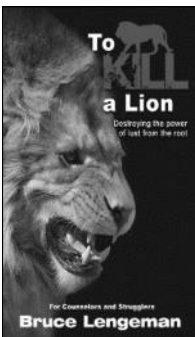
If you are interested in learning more about Dr. Gary Chapman and the 5 Love Languages, you can contact us and order his book, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts*.

Contact us at: The Amish Voice, PO Box 128, Savannah, OH 44874, or call us at (419) 962-1515. The cost of the book is \$14, shipping included.

Falling in love is easy. Staying in love—that's the challenge! How can you keep your relationship fresh and growing amid the demands, conflicts, and just plain boredom of everyday life?

In the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The 5 Love Languages*, you'll discover the secret that has transformed millions of relationships worldwide. Whether your relationship is flourishing or failing, Dr. Gary Chapman's proven approach to showing and receiving love will help you experience deeper and richer levels of intimacy with your partner—starting today.

The book includes the Couple's Personal Profile assessment — the same one you received in this issue of the Amish Voice — so you can discover your love language and that of your loved one.



Do you struggle with lust or other sins and addictions?

To Kill a Lion, written by Bruce Lengeman, is designed to help men find the roots of their sexual addiction. The theme is, "Men cry out, 'I know it is wrong, but why can't I stop!'" The book is for both counselors and strugglers. *To Kill a Lion* will help men understand their own sexuality and what makes it operate "out of

alignment" with God's design. You'll learn why it is healthy to be sexual as a man, but in a pure and Godly way. Though this book was not written for women, many are reading it and getting understanding of things they never knew about sexuality.

To order, call us at (419) 962-1515 or mail a check to The Amish Voice, PO Box 128, Savannah, OH 44874. The price of the book is \$15 (includes S&H).

Let's start with some questions before we dig into *What Separates Christianity From All Other Religions*.

How would you answer me if I sat across the table from you and asked, "Do you—with great confidence—know what you believe about Christianity?" What would you use to back up your answers?

How do your beliefs differ from 4,200 other religions in the world?

How do you know you have the right beliefs?

Would you change your beliefs if you knew they were wrong?

I believe these questions are all very important—not only for our own sake, but for the sake of others. If you have a family or are planning to someday have a family and raise them on your beliefs, at some point you will be faced with each one of the questions I just asked.

God's Word says... *be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you...* 1 Peter 3:15

Sooner or later, you and I will give account for what we believe—if not on this side of the grave, surely on the other.

In order to fully understand and defend our beliefs, it takes preparation—much preparation. As Christians, we must study and meditate on the Scriptures. We must also pray that God would *open our understanding* of the Scriptures.

Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. Luke 24:45

True understanding of God's Word comes from God alone. It takes the Holy Spirit to open up our hearts and make the Word of God come alive (John 14:26; 1 John 2:20, 27).

The great tragedy is that most professing believers do not know what they believe,

simply because they do not read the Scriptures.

For these reasons, I would like to take a few minutes and remind each one of us what separates Christianity from all other religions. I believe there are at least three major differences.

Religion Vs. Christianity

All Religions spell "DO"

Christianity spells "DONE"

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Rom 3:28 and 5:1

1) Christianity is not a religion; it's a relationship.

Christianity is not a religion—do, do, do; it's a relationship that God has established with His sons and daughters (2 Cor 6:18, Gal 4:6). In Christianity, God is the instigator, meaning God draws us (*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him* John 6:44, 65), and man is the recipient (Rom 8:3). According to Isaiah 53:6; 64:6; Rom 3:23; 6:23, there is nothing man can do to make himself right with God.

But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (the right) to become the sons of God... Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:11-12.

2) Christianity is based, not on what you can do for God, but rather, on what God did for you.

The word picture for RELIGION is man attempting to reach God on his own. A RELIGIOUS man places his own rules

and traditions above God's commandments; he believes that somehow his list of do's and don'ts will please God enough to make him acceptable. Jesus had a few words to say about that approach:

...this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Mark 7:6-9

Most of the 4,200 religions in our world today are made up of people working hard to reach God on their own.

CHRISTIANITY, on the other hand, is exactly opposite—it is not what I do for God, but rather, what God has already done for me.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship... Ephesians 2:8-10

3) Christianity is the only belief system where the religious leader not only died, but rose again.

Every religion in the world has a founder. Islam refers to Muhammad, Mormons refer to Joseph Smith, Jehovah's Witnesses refer to Charles Russell, Buddhists refer to Siddhartha Gautama, Christians refer to Jesus Christ, etc.

Every single founder whom I mentioned has died. And all are still dead, except one—Jesus Christ. My friend, the founder of Christianity is alive and sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Mark 16:19, John 21:14). —Joe Keim

I am writing letter as a plea to fathers in this generation. My heart has been deeply hurt by the things I see happening in today's generation, even in churches and religious circles.

We live in a fatherless generation. Our children have absentee fathers (whose own fathers were too busy for them) who somehow feel that fatherhood consists of special privileges, sharing seed, and providing an income (if their families are fortunate). When they come home from work, they figure that their day's work is accomplished, and so they put up their feet and relax while the wife and mom, who has been working hard all day, giving emotionally, spiritually, and physically to the children and is ready to relax as well, dishes up supper and cleans it all up, while trying to take care of the children alone.

Many times she is alone in trying to raise the children, and she is the one who carries the vision, feeling deeply burdened with the many unmet needs of her children's hearts and the lack of spiritual leadership in the home. She carries many burdens that are not hers to carry.

Often, she lives in bitterness and unspoken hurt. These feelings which are buried alive begin to take their toll on her body and she lacks energy and joy and peace. She feels overwhelmed and doesn't know which way to turn. She tries to communicate the children's needs, as well

as her own, but she is weary and worn, and it comes out in a whiny tone, which further serves to shut down her husband's emotions. She feels trapped, because a good wife, she has been told, is not supposed to discuss her husband's flaws. When she does share, she often feels unheard and then guilty because she spoke up.

Many, many women are in this situation, with large families, trying to raise their children, feeling no hope for the future and little fulfillment in life, because they married for love, for companionship, for a husband to love and care for, and in turn, she believed that she would be loved and protected.

When she feels unprotected, her respect falls. When her respect falls, his love for her wanes. This vicious cycle drains the marriage and brings hurt, pain, and bitterness. It causes the parents to be focused inward on their own pain, unable to focus on their children's needs and pain, allowing negative habits to form. This causes problems and strongholds to form in the household, creating more work and more frustration and weariness for the parents.

Soon, all the hurt and pain is causing mom and dad to speak harshly to their children. Love is no longer in the home.

We have long forgotten to pray and read the Bible with our children. We don't know where to begin fixing it. The enemy sighs in satisfaction. His mission to steal, kill, and

destroy is well on its way to completion.

But it does not need to end this way. If we can wake up, if we can go back to the basics, if we can go back to God and His Word, He can turn it around. There is nothing too hard for God. He began a good work in us and He is faithful to complete it. He is the author and the finisher of our faith. He is capable of healing us completely—body, soul, and spirit. He already paid the price for it, and we can receive it and believe it. He is a good, good Father.

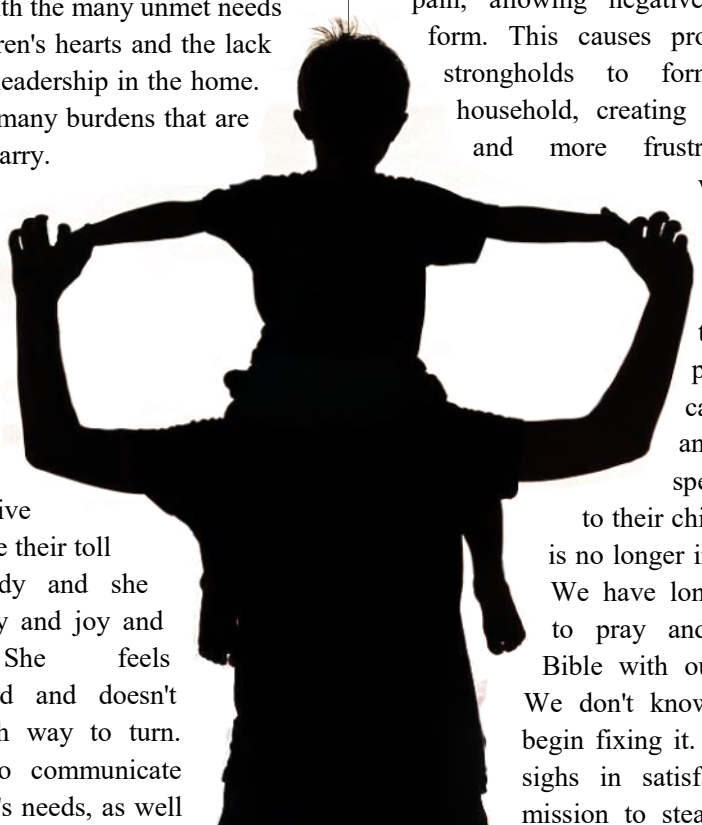
If a man and his wife can turn to God in repentance with all their hearts, and submit their wills to His, following His leading and direction in obedience, then He will make their path strait. He will shine His light on their journey and show them the way. They can once again find joy, beauty, and meaning in their lives and set their children up for success instead of destruction. He is such a faithful God and such a good Father. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and experience the great love He has for them.

He is waiting for fathers to wake up and find deep down inside themselves the men He created to love and lead their wives and children in righteousness. He created YOU, whoever you are, wherever you are, for a divine purpose. He wants you to start with the family He gave you. Your work is not as important as your family. Money is not as important as your family. Your children and your wife need you. If you can wake up and love them and spend time with them and lovingly lead them, they will love you back a hundred times over. You will be their hero and you will be of all men most blessed.

With love,

Your Sister in Christ

END



Part 9

AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS

As the world continues to turn its back on God, we want to take a look at what the future holds according to the One who is the Beginning and the End—God! We hope you enjoy and benefit from this series, courtesy of Middletown Bible Church. Follow along, fill in the blanks, and look up! May we all be ready for the return of Jesus Christ!

You will need a Bible for this lesson.

Our world has gone through some very difficult times. There have been **times of famine and great hunger**. We read about one such famine in the days of Joseph: "And the famine was over _____ the face of the _____" (Genesis 41:56).

There have been times when thousands have died from **disease**. In the 14th century, about one fourth of all the people in Europe (about 25 million people) died of a terrible disease which was called the "Black Death." This disease or plague was carried by fleas and rats.

There have also been **terrible wars** fought on Planet Earth. In the 20th century there have been two great WORLD WARS. Thousands and thousands of men and women from many different countries have lost their lives because of these bloody wars. This world has also known some very **cruel rulers**, such as Pharaoh who lived in the days of Moses, Nero who lived in the days of Paul, and Hitler who lived in the 20th century (who put to death millions of Jewish people). Great numbers of people have suffered under rulers such as these.

There have also been **terrible persecutions** which have taken place on Planet Earth. The early Christians were greatly persecuted by the Romans. They were killed with the sword, burned, destroyed by wild animals, or tortured by other cruel methods. Later, many Christians were burned at the stake in Spain. Even today there are Christians who are suffering and being persecuted and dying because of their faith in Christ. God's people have never had an easy road (see Hebrews 11:35-38). During the second World War it is believed that about six million Jewish people were put to death by the Germans.

Yes, the world has known all of these things: famine, hunger disease, death, wars, wicked rulers, and terrible persecutions. As we look ahead to the future, what should we expect? Will

the days ahead be brighter? We might think, "Surely things cannot get worse. Things should start getting better. Brighter days must be ahead. This world has been through so much trouble already. How could things possibly get worse?"

This world has gone through times of great trouble, but the Bible clearly teaches that the time of greatest trouble is still in the future. The worst is yet to come! Things will not get better (at least not yet). Things will get much, much worse. The world is headed for a time of trouble greater than anything mankind has ever experienced. Planet Earth has gone through some whirlwinds of trouble, but a great TORNADO is on its way!

There Has Never Been A Time Like It!

The prophet Daniel said that there shall be a "TIME OF T _____" upon Planet Earth (Daniel 12:1). This will be the greatest time of trouble the world has ever known. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of this same time in Jeremiah 30:7: "Alas, for that day is _____, so that _____ is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's _____."

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke about this same time of trouble in Matthew 24:21. In this verse He said "for then shall be G _____ T _____." TRIBULATION means "trouble, great distress." According to what Jesus said in Matthew 24:21, has the world ever known such a time of trouble as this? _____ When this time of trouble is over, will there ever be another time of trouble like it? _____ This will be the darkest hour the world has ever known.

It Will Be a Short Time

There is only one good thing about this

Turn
Page...

Time of Trouble, Continued

time of great trouble: ***It will not last very long!*** The Great Tribulation that our Lord spoke about in Matthew 24:21 will only last 3½ years. This is good news for those people who will be living on earth during this time. God will not make this a long time; He will make it a short time (see Matthew 24:22). Even though it will be a very difficult time in which to live, the good news is that it will be over soon!

World War II was a very terrible and difficult war, but one good thing about it was that it only lasted about five years. Most people do not enjoy sitting in the dentist's chair, but they do it anyway because they know that it is needful, and they know that they only have to sit there for a short time (usually for an hour or less). It will soon be over! If you told them that they would have to sit in the dentist chair for three days, they would probably never do it!

When we get into times of trouble in our own lives, we need to remember that the trouble will not last forever. There will be an end to it. Job went through a time of great trouble and suffering. Was there an end to it (James 5:11; Job 42:10-17)? _____ Joseph was thrown into a pit (Genesis 37:24). Did he stay in that pit forever? _____ Joseph was also thrown into prison (Genesis 39:20). Did he stay in prison forever? _____ The time of great tribulation will not last forever. It will only last for 3½ short years.

The Worst Will Be Followed by the Best

The time of greatest trouble will be followed by the time of greatest blessing! According to the Bible, what will happen immediately after this time of great tribulation (see Matthew 24:29-30)? _____

The KING OF KINGS will return to this earth and set up His kingdom on the earth!

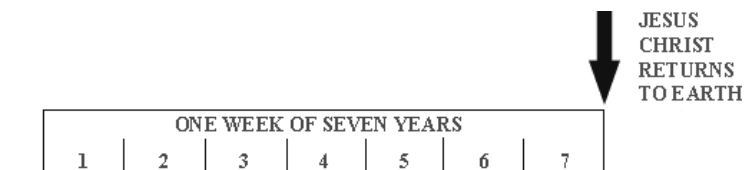
Have you ever seen a thunderstorm approaching? Everything gets very dark and then the storm begins and the thunder crashes and the rain pours down. But then the storm passes, the sun comes out, and everything is quiet and peaceful. There might even be a rainbow in the sky! This is the way it will be on earth after the stormy time of tribulation. The "sun" will come out (see Malachi 4:2). Jesus Christ will return to this earth. It will be a time of peace and blessing. It will be the most wonderful time the world has ever known. The worst will be followed by the best!

It is true that the worst days are still ahead. The time of great

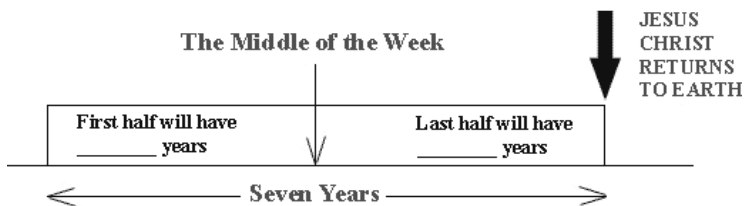
trouble is coming. But it is also true that the best days are still ahead. No matter how dark the days might be, we can pray, "THY K _____ C _____!" (Matthew 6:10). LET THY KINGDOM COME! After the storm, there is a great day coming!

The Length of This Time of Great Trouble

In Daniel 9:27 the prophet talks about "ONE W _____." He is talking about the one week before Jesus Christ returns to this earth. This is a very special week. Usually when we talk about a week we are talking about a time period that is made up of seven days. But Daniel is not talking about a week of days. He is talking about another kind of week. He is talking about a WEEK OF YEARS. When Daniel spoke of ONE WEEK he was talking about SEVEN YEARS! He was talking about the seven years before Jesus Christ returns to earth:



Also in Daniel 9:27 the prophet talks about "the midst of the week." This means "the MIDDLE of the week." Remember, this week is made up of seven years. If you put a line right in the middle of this week, then you have divided this week into two parts with each part being 3½ years:



The time of Great Tribulation that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:21 is the last 3½ years (the last half of this week). This time of great trouble will take place during the 3½ years before Jesus Christ returns to earth. The Bible uses different ways to describe this 3½ year period of time:

1. **1,260 DAYS** (Revelation 12:6,14)
2. _____ MONTHS (Revelation 11:2; 13:5)
3. "A time, times, and half a time" (Revelation 12:14)

A time = 1 year

Times = 2 years

Half a time = half a year

What is the total number of years? _____

4. "A short time" (Revelation 12:12)

**Continued
Next Page**

A Time of Judgment

Today we are living in a day of GRACE. God is being kind to men even though they do not deserve it. God is offering His gift of salvation to all men (John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11-12). God is not judging the world; rather He is giving people time to be saved.

When men reject God's grace, then there is nothing left but God's judgment. If men reject God's love, then they must face God's wrath and anger.

In the days of Noah, God was gracious to men for 120 years (Genesis 6:3 and 1 Peter 3:20). During these years, Noah was building the ark and men, women, and children were given an opportunity to be saved. People could have come into the ark with Noah, but they refused to believe God. Finally the 120 years came to an end and the door of the ark closed. The day of grace was over, and the day of judgment began. THE FLOOD CAME!

Today God has been gracious to men and women for much longer than 120 years. For about 2,000 years, God has been gracious to this world, inviting men to be saved. But soon God's day of grace will be over and God will pour out His anger upon this world. Instead of being the God of grace, He will be the God of judgment. This is one of the reasons the tribulation will be such a difficult time. God will pour out His judgments upon the people who live on the earth.

Three Series of Judgments

The book of Revelation teaches us that there will be three series of judgments, or plagues, that will fall upon the earth:

1) The Seven Seal Judgments

Read about these in Revelation chapter 6 and 8:1. What are some of the things that will happen to those living on the earth?

2) The Seven Trumpet Judgments

Read about these in Revelation chapters 8 and 9 and 11:15. What are some of the things that will happen?

3) The Seven Vial or Bowl Judgments

Read about these in Revelation chapter 16. What are some of the things that will happen?

These terrible judgments remind us of the plagues that God brought on the land of Egypt in the days of Moses (Exodus 6-12). One difference is this: in the days of Moses, the plagues came only upon the land of Egypt. During the time of great trouble, the plagues and judgments will come upon ALL THE EARTH (see Revelation 3:10).

What will these people do when these plagues come down upon them? Will they wake up and turn to God? Will they believe God and turn away from their sinful ways? Will they repent? The answer is found in Revelation 9:20-21. Do they change their minds and turn from their wicked ways? _____

A Time of Grace

Even though this time of great trouble will be a time when God will judge sinful men, it will also be a time when people will be saved. Even at a time when God judges, His grace can be seen. Even at the darkest hour of human history, there will be a ray of light. God will reach down in love and save people by His grace!

Read Revelation chapter 7. This chapter tells us about people who will be saved during this time of great trouble. How many saved Jews will there be (Revelation 7:4)? _____

_____ In verse 9 we learn about another group of saved people from every nation. How many were there? _____

Yes, many saved people will come out of great tribulation (verse 14)!

We also know that God's **good news** will be preached in all the world: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in _____ the _____" (Matthew 24:14). Then Christ shall return to earth. The message of good news will probably be something like this:

"I have good news for you! The King is coming soon! You need to repent and turn from your sins and believe in Christ the King. Even though you are living in a time of great trouble, cheer up! The King of Kings is coming! Receive Him now as your Saviour or else face Him later as your Judge!"

If Christ were to come for His believers today, would He take you with Him or would He leave you behind? Are you sure that you are saved? Are you sure that you have eternal life? If you are not sure, please let us know. We want to help you TO BE SURE ABOUT THESE THINGS. We want you to be able to face the future without fear. You can know TODAY!

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END

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September 2016

Connecting with Your Child, Parts 1-2, by Focus on the Family: Dr. Karyn Purvis offers practical advice for parents on building and maintaining a trust-based relationship with their children. She explains how parent-child attachments are designed by God to work, what happens when that connection is broken, and how parents can give their children a voice for their thoughts and feelings.

Resting in God's Faithfulness, Parts 1-2, by Charles Stanley: How do you respond when you find that your faith is being tested—when you don't know what God is doing in your life, and your prayers seem to go unanswered?

Let us Arise and Build, by Adrian Rogers: There is rubbish and debris in all our lives, and if we're going to build the life God intends for us, we must deal with it. You are special to God. He made you for a great purpose. Learn the three "F's" of getting there: FIX, FOCUS, and FORM.

My Story, An Amish Boy's Journey to Peace, Parts 1-2, by Emanuel Schrock: I was Amish; everything I did and everywhere I went, I could not be anything else. My clothes were Amish, my house was Amish, my parents were Amish, my brothers and sisters were

Amish, and, above all, my church was Amish. But I did not know God.

Somewhere Forever, Parts 1-2, by Andrew Coblenz: Someday, we will open our eyes in eternity. There is no escape. When that takes place, we will either end up in heaven or end up in hell. The choice must be made today, not in eternity. Listen to this sermon by Andrew Coblenz and see if you are ready.

October 2016

Shut it Up, by Family Life Today: Scripture says there is life and death in the power of the tongue. How do you cultivate life with your words? Karen Ehman offers some coaching and suggestions for taming your tongue.

Parenting Your Teens When Times are Tough, by Focus on the Family: Dr. Greg Smalley offers encouragement to parents who are struggling with the challenges of raising teens.

My Story, An Amish Boy's Journey to Peace, Parts 3-4, by Emanuel Schrock: The words "once" and "forever" kept coming up: Once for all. ... One sacrifice for sins forever.... By one offering. . . ." Slowly, the truth dawned on me. Christ had made one sacrifice for my sins, and that was all it took. Nothing more was needed to pay for my sins, because He had finished the

job. I could do nothing to add to His sacrifice to make it better.

Signed, Sealed, and Delivered, Parts 1-3, by Greg Laurie: Why do we exist? Greg Laurie points out that we exist to bring glory to God. He explains that when we live in harmony with our purpose, we'll live in possession of what God wants from us. Are you living as God intended?

November 2016

Freedom From Bondage, Parts 1-2, by Charles Stanley: Is there something preventing you from becoming everything that God created you to be? Listen to this sermon and find out.

God's Blueprint for a Healthy Marriage, Parts 1-3, by Focus on the Family: Dr. Timothy Keller and his wife, Kathy, describe their personal marriage journey and how a Biblically-rooted understanding of God's design for marriage transcends that of both ancient and modern cultures.

How to Deal with Difficult People, by Leadership Coach: We all know people difficult to deal with. On this episode of Leadership Coach INC, you are presented to "Invitations," or ways, to think about dealing with a difficult person in your life.

The Amish Are Expanding to South America

As of May 2016, the estimated Amish population is 308,030. This includes both children and adults and covers thirty one states in the US and three Canadian providences. This year, the Amish started two new settlements on Prince Edward Island, located in Canada.

The population number only includes horse and buggy driving Amish. Car driving Amish, such as the Beachy Amish and Amish Mennonites are not included.

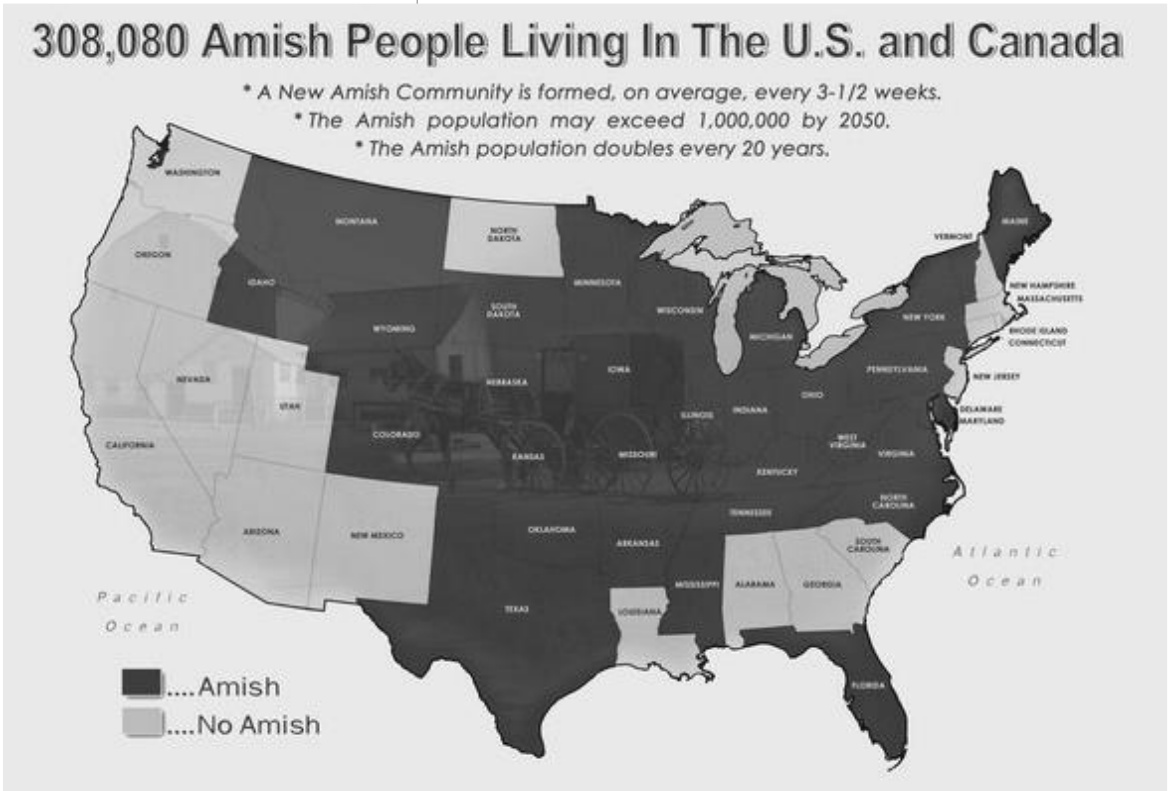
In the fall of 2015, some New Order Amish people from Ohio established two settlements in Bolivia and Argentina, located in South America. These smaller settlements are not included in the North American population.

Fifteen new settlements were started during the past year; eight other settlements failed.

Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana continue to make up about two-thirds of the 308,030 population.

Amish families average five or more children. At least eighty-five percent of the population joins the Amish church. A few outsiders have joined the Amish.

The population and other 2016 statistics were taken from the *Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College website.*



Amish Population By State

State/Province	# of Settlements	# of Church Districts	Est. Population
Ohio	58	537	72,495
Pennsylvania	55	479	70,890
Indiana	22	369	51,660
New York	51	136	18,360
Wisconsin	51	141	18,050
Michigan	45	109	14,495
Missouri	43	98	11,465
Kentucky	41	83	10,375
Iowa	23	63	9,070
Illinois	19	55	7,095
Ontario	16	40	5,400
Minnesota	21	36	4,535
Tennessee	9	22	2,750
Kansas	7	15	2,025
Delaware	1	10	1,500
Maryland	3	11	1,485
Virginia	6	8	1,080
Oklahoma	4	7	945

(Continued on next Column)

State/Province	# of Settlements	# of Church Districts	Est. Population
Maine	5	6	810
Nebraska	4	5	675
Colorado	4	5	675
Montana	4	5	675
West Virginia	3	3	405
Arkansas	2	2	270
North Carolina	2	2	170
Mississippi	1	2	150
Florida	1	2	150
South Dakota	1	1	75
Idaho	1	1	75
Texas	1	1	75
Wyoming	1	1	75
Texas	1	1	75
Prince Edward Island	2	2	30
New Brunswick	1	1	25
Vermont	1	1	20
Total	509	2,259	308,030

Amish Voice Conference Calls—Past, Present, and Future



Join us for a live conference call on the first Sunday of every month at 8:00 P.M. EST.

Simply dial (302) 202-1110, and then enter the conference code 409703.

Join us in discussion or just listen to the call!

- ◆ **Sunday Night, October 02:** Unity in Christ
- ◆ **Sunday Night, November 06:** Victory in Jesus

If you missed any of our previous conference call discussions, dial (641) 715-3800 and enter code 89752 and listen to the recordings.

September—Norma Miller Testimony: Listen to Norma Miller and her life-changing testimony. You may know her

from the articles she writes for the Amish Voice. This month, she writes about fathers on page 8.

August—Power of Prayer: We know that prayer is important. We should pray often and effectively. Have you seen God answer prayer in your own life? Do you believe that God answers prayer today?

July—Taking the Gospel to Others: We should take the Gospel to others, but what does that mean? What is the Gospel? Are we obeying the command of Jesus to take the Gospel into all the world?

June—The Return of Jesus: Jesus is coming back, and soon. Are you ready?

May—Separation: What does the Bible mean that we should be separate from the world? Is it a matter of outward appearance and actions, a matter of the heart, or both?

Sermon Without a Word

—Author Unknown



A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the preacher decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening.

The preacher found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his preacher's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace, and waited.

The preacher made himself at home but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs.

After some minutes, the preacher took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning log and placed it to the side, away from all the hot logs, all by itself. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The church member quietly watched all this without saying a word. As the one lone log's flame flickered and went out, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The preacher glanced at his watch and realized it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead log and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the preacher reached the door to leave, his church member (with a tear running down his cheek) said, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday."

We live in a world today which tries to say too much with too little. Consequently, few listen. Sometimes the best sermons are the ones left unspoken.

END

Five Things Every Person in the World Seeks After

There are five things in life that every person in the world desires and passionately seeks after. It makes no difference whether he or she is young or old, rich or poor, educated or unlearned.

Married people and single people strive after them. City slickers, country folk, the famous, and the unknown—all seek and yearn for *love, acceptance, security, purpose, and identity*. The wonderful thing about Christianity is that all five of these needs are instantly met the moment one is born into God's family. The world around us may hate and reject us, but

Jesus Christ will always *love* and *accept* us. The storms of life will certainly continue to rage, but Jesus will hold us *securely*.

Yes, our dear Lord has given us reason to live. He also gave us *identity* the moment He placed us in His eternal family.

Oh, glory to God our Savior! —Joe Keim

Letter From a Reader

—By J. O.

Dear Amish Voice: God has revealed to us that our lifestyle has no merits for salvation. Galatians 3:2-3 says, *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

Galatians 4:9 states, *But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?*

We now see the lack of spirituality and the way people leaned on and trusted in their supposedly humble lifestyle. Still, we unconsciously cling to that security.

The questions arise, “If we completely lose our lifestyle, where will we end up? If keeping that lifestyle will help us and the next generation stay spiritual, why don’t we consider it as part of our salvation?” Our human tendency is to think that keeping this lifestyle will help us stay more spiritual and more humble, when in reality it takes the focus off God and puts it on human effort. The real focus is drawing close to God in

meditation and prayer and service. If we plant Jesus and His word deep in our children’s hearts, we teach them that Jesus is their friend who hears all their prayers, and that He is the only thing in this life that can keep us spiritual. Let’s live and breathe Jesus Christ. He will keep us Godly and humble in a way that no human methods can.

When we think that our lifestyle keeps us close to God, we show our sinful pride in that outward observance as being part of our protection against Satan, when really the only thing greater than the evil one is God who has given us the spiritual armor, His Spirit, His word, and prayer. The armor that we have created is weak and human, beggarly and pathetic, compared to God’s wonderful plan of protection. Our old belief system tends to go back to trusting in things that we were taught would protect us, when it is really just Satan’s means of getting our eyes off the real protection— Jesus Christ.

Where is the spiritual fruit that we should be reaping? Many people go from the sin of legalism to the sin of

being overly liberal. Both are sins, but the liberality is not as deceptive and will be easier to see. People can live in legalism for years and be oblivious to the fact of their lost condition. Our children down through the generations will be in danger of falling away to either legalism or liberality, so our only means of safety is to teach them to love Jesus, to know and experience His saving power, and to study God’s word and rely on it as the final authority for direction. — J. O.

Dear Reader, *it is not necessarily wrong to have a certain lifestyle. It may even be beneficial and admirable. The problem comes when we trust in that lifestyle instead of in Jesus. In what are you trusting? In your works? In your lifestyle? In your religion? Or in Jesus?*

If you would like to write to us or call us, please do. Ask a question, request more information, comment on an article, suggest a topic. We would love to hear from you.

The Amish Voice ♦ P.O. Box 128
Savannah, OH 44874 ♦ (419) 962-1515



Matthew 13:2-9: And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, **some seeds fell by the**

way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Read Matthew 13:10-23 for Jesus’ explanation of the sower and the seed.

Contact The Amish Voice . . .

1. If you have any comments, ideas, prayer requests, suggestions, or questions, or if you want to send us an article or your testimony to possibly be printed in the *Amish Voice*.

2. If you enjoy the *Amish Voice* and would like to help us with the cost of printing and postage.

3. If you know of others who might benefit from the *Amish Voice*.

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Topics, Testimonies, and
Live Conference Calls Over
the Phone. See Schedules
on Pages 12 and 14!

All I Need

—By Anna Schrock

I am sitting here in bed miserable. My mouth and ear are in pain from a toothache that won't go away after three days. I finally couldn't take it anymore, and tonight I broke down. The funny thing is, the pain is not the only reason for my breakdown.

You may ask yourself, "Okay, why is she getting so personal?" I would encourage you to hold on for a bit. I have something important to say. I will try to put it into words.

God is good. I've been caught up in so much, and I've been trying to understand so much that my head sometimes feels like a murky mud puddle too dense to make sense of anything. There are so many different viewpoints presented to me as well as different opinions, beliefs, dress codes, and more. In the middle of it all, I have been presented with an impossible situation with seemingly impossible decisions threatening to drive me mad (I may possibly have created a mountain out of a mole hill, but to me, it is that bad).

My faith has been tested to the maximum

degree. I have tried hard to find realistic and factual explanations for everything in my life. I realize that there are answers to my questions; however, the only way to know ALL of the answers ALL of the time is to know everything there is to know, which is, of course, impossible.

Tonight, I accept the fact that my brain is too small to know everything, so I will simply trust in the One who does know everything. When God's ways don't make sense to me, I know—I KNOW, it is simply due to my limited intelligence. How do I know this to be true? From experience. A tiny little *plink* of truthful knowledge dropped into my head would be enough, time and time again, to dissolve my sincere accusations. In the end, I would simply always respond with: "Oh.....ok."

This is where I'm at right now at 12:18 a.m., sitting here physically uncomfortable. I am sure of one thing from the very core of my being: God is a good God. He is holy and just in every way. I look at everybody. I look at myself. There is always some form of disappointment, because we're not

perfect; but as I look at God, I see that He is perfect. He is good, through and through. There is no smudge, no shameful imperfection, nothing but pureness and goodness. This is the kind of God I am able to trust with my soul, my family, and my life. This is the God I worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). This is the God I will follow through the twists and turns in the maze of life, which has many fine lines that are hard to distinguish.

I don't need all the answers. I don't need to be able to point at a group of professing Christians and tell myself which one is right and which one is wrong. I only need God, and I only need to worship Him in spirit and in truth. He will then show me the truth I need to know. I could go on forever with more things I have learned, but this is already too long, and I'd get off subject, so I will leave you with this verse:

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 136:1

END